

THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, the 29th May 1946.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at five of the clock, on Wednesday, the 29th May 1946, Mr. President (THE HON. SRI R. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAJU) in the Chair.

[Note.—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

I.—MOTION *RE* FOOD AND CLOTH SITUATION IN THE PROVINCE—*cont.*

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ Discussion will now be resumed on the Food and Cloth question.

“ I have received notice of the following amendment to the motion of the Hon. the Chief Minister, from the hon. Member K. Uppi Sahib Bahadur :—

“ Add the following at the end :—

“ and on such consideration, the House is of opinion that the draft proposals presented by the Government to the House with regard to the food administration are impracticable and unworkable and ineffective to tackle the impending crisis in food and cloth; and

giving effect to the said proposals is fraught with dangerous results; and

such defects as are existing in the present system are remediable without the necessity of substituting the present system by a completely new system as adumbrated by the draft proposals; and

the present crisis in the food and cloth situation requires immediate and special attention. It is necessary that a Board consisting of not more than 15 members and not less than 11 be constituted for the Province consisting of representatives of the major political parties of the Provincial Legislature with plenary powers to deal with all questions relating to food and cloth in the Province, that the Board shall elect its chairman and that the Board shall constitute advisory committees in the districts and in taluks consisting of the representatives of major political parties.”

“ Discussion will now go on simultaneously on both the amendment and the main motion.”

* K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ Mr. President, Sir, I may say at the very outset that the Muslim League Party is prepared to make their policy quite clear. From the very beginning, long ago, when other parties in India were not prepared to co-operate with the bureaucracy, the Muslim League Party made it quite clear that in the matter of the food situation in India, it was prepared to co-operate with anybody and everybody. It is not a party question; it is a humanitarian question; it is a question of the lives of millions of human beings. That policy was made clear by none

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other than the Qaid-I-Azam, Mr. Jinnah. We, in carrying out that policy, are prepared to co-operate with the party in power in all practical and possible ways.

“ The food situation in the whole of India, especially in Southern India, is very bad. Famine is staring us in the face. The very statement of the Hon. the Chief Minister has made our position look very very grave. There are five or six months before the next harvest is available and the Province is short of food by about 300,000 tons. Wherefrom are we to get this deficit quantity is yet a matter of very serious anxiety for all of us. We, the members of the Muslim League, are prepared to co-operate with the party in power and with any others. Sir, I am one who hail from Malabar. In 1943, our food position was very critical and we were on the verge of famine. You know, Sir, in Malabar thousands of people died, not for want of food, but for want of sufficient food. Fortunately for us, the then Government and the officers who were then in charge of our district, rose to the situation and hurriedly supplied us with food.

“ In this connexion, I may refer, for the information of the Hon. Minister, to the fact that the distant officers then in Malabar committed some blunder perhaps out of their ignorance of the situation or to avoid trouble. But the effect of that is there now. I trust the Hon. Minister will take steps to rectify that mistake. For the northern part of Malabar one of the main sources of supply of rice is Coorg. Thousands of tons of paddy and rice are annually imported into Malabar from Coorg; and throughout the northern taluks of Malabar, people are depending upon the imports of rice from Coorg. The then Collector of Malabar owing to a certain difficulty which he had encountered, in the year 1942 or 1943 said :

‘ We do not want paddy from Coorg.’ He met with certain difficulties in the matter of procuring conveyances; in those days, you know, Sir, it was very difficult to get conveyance. And in order to avoid that trouble, he said there was no need for Coorg paddy. Unfortunately for the people of Malabar, the Coorg Government immediately made contract with the Government of Mysore, and at present not a grain of paddy from Coorg is allowed to come to Malabar. In the past, the whole of the Coorg paddy used to come to Malabar. I want the Hon. Minister to take note of this and to see that at least from next year onwards, that paddy is again brought to Malabar; and I trust he will immediately begin correspondence with the Coorg Government.

“ Then, Sir, there is another point which I would like to bring to the notice of the Government. The ration now allowed for all the districts in the Presidency is 12 ounces, that is the reduced ration. But in Malabar, for what reason I do not know, the minimum quantity allowed is only 10 ounces at present; and it is reported and I think the Hon. Minister also said the other day, that there is a proposal to reduce the quantity of ration further, as one of the steps to cope with the present situation. I think the Hon. Minister will remember this and see that in the general reduction proposed, the ration for Malabar is not again reduced from 10 to 8 or 9 ounces.

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Yesterday, Sir, the hon. Dr. Rajan was telling us that even 12 ounces ration was not sufficient to keep a man in good health. So, if you again reduce the quantity for Malabar, I am afraid it will be disastrous.

“ Now, Sir, the immediate question that faces us is : how to make up this deficit of 300,000 tons of food? That is our immediate and urgent problem. The Government have made certain proposals; they propose to meet this deficit by adopting certain measures, one of which is by preventing waste. That is good. Another is by intensive procurement. In regard to this, the proposal made by them is fraught with difficulties. They want to make an experiment; they introduce a new machinery. How far that will work and whether it will be successful is a matter for the future to decide. The Hon. Chief Minister himself does not know whether it will succeed or not. There is a proposal to appoint committees. Very well. But already there are serious charges made against the methods adopted at present in regard to procurement. What you suggest is a long-range remedy. You have to constitute first the village committees; village committees are constituted by the Tahsildar; he has to go to the villages or to a group of villages, summon the villagers and then from among them select five or eight persons. The Hon. Chief Minister knows and all of us know that in my parts and in fact in all parts of the Province, there are not many villages which are free from factions, one or more parties. Whatever may be their motives, there they are; there are the Brahman-Non-Brahman factions, there is the Muslim party, and there are so many others. There cannot therefore be a joint or an all-agreed committee in any of the villages. Then, if some persons are selected, there will be some other rivals who are disappointed and they will appeal to the Divisional Officer; then the Divisional Officer will have to hear the appeals from hundreds of villagers; and he will have to revise or confirm the decision once made, and then form the committee. By the time the committee comes into existence where is the time to attend to this food problem. To-day, famine is staring us in the face and by the time these committees are constituted and they begin to function, the devil of a famine will over take us.

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“ There is another difficulty which I do wish to mention now. So, Sir, I would like to mention that it is only after the constitution of the village committees that we can have the whole edifice. First of all the village committees should be formed and only when it is found that they function properly, the taluk and district committees can be formed. The whole edifice is based on the village committees. When that edifice will be complete is a matter for speculation.

“ Then as to their functions, it is stated that the village committee shall be the purchaser and it is not known how it will affect the ryot. The menon or the village karnam has to prepare the list of ryots and estimate the surplus produce that will be available for sale by the ryots and this will be placed before the village committee. Before this committee is constituted and made to function,

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it will be nearly six months from now and harvest may be over by that time. My submission is that the scheme adumbrated now is not workable and is not fit to cope with the present situation. It is for this reason that I propose this amendment, namely :—

' Add the following at the end :—

" and on such consideration, the House is of opinion that the draft proposals presented by the Government to the House with regard to the food administration are impracticable and unworkable and ineffective to tackle the impending crisis in food and cloth ; and "

Sir mark the word 'impending.' As I said before, famine is staring us in the face and its shadow is already there and we want 300 thousand tons of food to tide over the crisis.

" giving effect to the said proposals is fraught with dangerous results ; and

" such defects as are existing in the present system are remediable without the necessity of substituting the present system by a completely new system as adumbrated by the draft proposals ; and " " "

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The hon. Member need not read the amendment."

* K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Sir, there is another point. Suppose you are able to bring into existence thousands of committees by this mass production method and co-operative societies too. I ask the Hon. the Prime Minister whether the existing co-operative societies in the Province which have been formed with great care and scrutiny by the Co-operative officials, are all a success. I know very many hundreds of these societies have gone to dogs. In such circumstances, the Hon. the Prime Minister proposes to produce by mass production co-operative societies which will be purchasing agents. After all, where is the money for it and the necessary staff to supervise them and who is to be responsible if the public money is misused. And, how are you going to control them? You will certainly require a crore of rupees for the whole presidency and where is this huge amount to come from. This huge amount of public money may go anywhere. I therefore think that the whole scheme seems to be very impracticable and fraught with danger. What I would suggest in the circumstances is to try and work with the existing machinery to tide over the present situation. If you like you may create a committee of this House and apportion the work and let the whole policy in regard to the food problem be under that committee and with that committee's co-operation and the co-operation of the departments concerned, try to work it. That is my solution to the problem.

" With these few words, Sir, I move my amendment."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I see the House is rather thin to-day and I am afraid some of the members want to go home. I wish to set a time-limit for the speeches of the hon. Members who wish to speak. I should be much obliged—I allowed about 20 minutes

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to the mover of the amendment—if members could limit their speeches to 10 minutes each. I do not, however, want to prevent any hon. Member from taking part in the discussion but I would suggest that they may be short, succinct and to the point.”

* KHAN BAHADUR SYED TAJUDDIN SAHIB BAHADUR :—
“ Sir, are we sitting to-morrow also as the Assembly is also sitting to-morrow?”

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—“ In the Assembly I am told, members were allowed 15 minutes each.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ That will depend upon the speech.”

* LIEUT.-COL. K. R. K. IYENGAR :—“ Mr. President, Sir, as a medical man and as one who has been on several occasions officiating Director of the Coonoor Nutritional Research Laboratories, I rise to speak on the food situation in this Presidency. It is an acknowledged fact that the food situation in our Presidency at the present moment is very grave and this can only be met from imports from other countries. England is doing her best for us and she is herself suffering from food shortage, but the United States hold the key to the situation. She has plenty of food to spare. She has so much that she can afford to feed pigs on wheat. Ex-President Hoover who was here lately expressed that our food situation was indeed grave. Our able statesman of international reputation I mean, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliyar is fighting with the authorities in the United States to get our requirements of wheat. Surely, Sir, the United States will not be inhuman to refuse to save our hungry countrymen from starvation and prefer to give the grains to the pigs. It is sincerely hoped that the promised supply will reach us as soon as possible.

“ Now, Sir, what are we going to do ourselves to increase our food production. I beg to put my suggestions under two headings, viz., short-term policy and long-term policy.

“ Under short-term policy, the villagers should be encouraged to grow edible roots for their consumption. There are plenty of waste lands, poramboke lands, in every village and these can be made use of to grow these roots. Also, as many wells as possible should be dug and for this purpose we should seek the aid of the military authorities to give us their Sappers and Miners. They with their modern equipment could dig many wells in a fortnight what would take the villagers to do in one year.

“ Then there is the question of silt in tanks. We do not know when they were last removed; it may perhaps be 15 or 20 years before. Now that the war is over we can get bull-dozers to remove the silts, thereby enabling tanks to store water for longer periods. The silt thus removed could be mixed with the manure. The army has won us this war and surely if they are given an opportunity they can help us to win the war against food shortage.

“ The Government have agreed to give a bonus of Rs. 15 per acre for short-term crops. I do not think this is much of an incentive for the cultivators. My humble suggestion is, give them free good quality seeds and manure for this year and if necessary for

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the next year also. If you have not enough money to do this, raise a big loan and leave it to your successor to pay it (laughter). After all you are doing this for a good cause.

“ Now, Sir, under long-term policy I would suggest that irrigation projects should be undertaken wherever possible thereby bringing lots of waste lands under cultivation. I am open to correction, but I am told that many of the mirasdars have considerable trouble with their tenants and so why not the Government lease out these lands for 15 or 20 years on a fair rent and the Agricultural Department with the help of the Irrigation Department should undertake to grow more crops on a scientific basis and sell the grains to the public at a reasonable price. Yesterday, we heard Dr. Rajan one of the members of this House saying, that from a scientific approach to the problem he was able to treble and even quadruple the yield from his own lands. In some of the districts in this Presidency—I mean Salem and Coimbatore—growing of cotton should be restricted and thus more lands could be used for food crops. We can do with very few clothes, but it is impossible to live on an empty stomach. Look at us here. The amount of extra cloth worn by us will clothe at least another 100 or 200 people. I am referring to the gentlemen in this House and not to lady members of the House (laughter). If necessary, we can exist for the time being on using langots only. Sir, I may tell you, I met, while in Coonoor, many officer prisoners of war—Europeans and Indians who were taken prisoners of war by the Japs in Singapore—and they had lived for more than three years with simple loin cloths and nothing more—the officers too and what they suffered was, not from want of clothes, but they suffered from want of food.

“ Sir, another point I would like to mention is the edible starch now used to a large extent for industrial purposes. For the time being it should be cut short and other means of producing starch for industrial purposes should be considered. Tamarind seeds and mango seeds are thrown away as waste and a clever chemist could produce a starch from them for use in industries.

“ As regards wheat replacing rice, to some extent, the people in our Presidency should get used to wheat, because it is as nutritious as rice and even better. But, what I say is now that you have not got rice, you must use something else in its place. Wheat is a jolly good substitute. I say this from my own experience. I am eating wheat for the last eight years. In the issue of wheat, Government must see that only whole wheat broken into pieces is issued and not as atta as in rural areas. The villagers have no oil or ghee to use with the atta and they have no means to break the wheat into two or three pieces. In the urban areas wheat can be issued as whole, broken or in the form of atta. The Government should undertake to break up the whole grain into three or four bits and also to convert wheat into atta when necessary.

“ Sir, in our present critical food situation, unless we all united to solve the local problems in villages, towns and districts of the presidency as a whole, resisting all temptations of speculative and competitive buying, I can assure you that disaster awaits us.

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“ Mr. President, Sir, our present popular Government would stand or fall, depending on how successfully they tided over the present food crisis. Prohibition and revolutionary changes in the present-day methods of education can wait, but the work of saving our people from starvation cannot afford to wait.” (Laughter.)

* SRI K. NATARAJAN :—“ Mr. President, let me offer my congratulations to the Hon. the Premier on behalf of the general public for the promptitude with which he and his colleagues have come forward with their solution for the acute situation of the moment. In that connexion, I wish only to address my remarks to the question of procurement and ‘ grow more food ’ campaign. I do not want to cover the ground traversed by previous speakers. I only wish to say there is much scope for improvement in the productive side of our agricultural operations. It has been stated in several administration reports that the area under cultivation in this province is 31 million acres. It does not mean that the rest is utterly uncultivable. Between the utterly uncultivable land and the one that is actually under cultivation, there are certain kinds of lands of two categories, namely, current fallow and cultivable lands that have been lying waste for some time past. I wish that in order to give an impetus to the grow more food campaign the Government will devote their attention to such lands. By that means an extent of 9 million acres of current fallow lands and some eleven million acres of cultivable land gone waste might be reclaimed and made to yield. I urge the Government to direct their attention to the first category of land and then to the other. It might not be advisable for them to spend their energy on lands which are not worthwhile now to cultivate and which are entirely uncultivable.

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“ Pursuant to the ‘ grow more food ’ campaign, a number of proposals have been given by the Hon. Premier in pages 5 and 8 of his pamphlet. Mention has been made that efforts will be made to improve cultivation by employing more and better manure and calculations have been made on the basis that the harvest will begin to be collected from December 1946. In October 1946, you may expect the first crop, in January or February 1947, you can expect harvest of the double crop lands and the saniba crop you may expect somewhere in March 1947. First of all you must see if anything cannot be done with reference to kuruvaï crop. In that connexion, we understand from a Government communiqué that water from the Cauvery-Mettur canal will be made available to lands of the old delta of Tanjore with a ten per cent cut with effect from the 15th of June and after the old delta has been satisfied, water will be made available to the new delta and there too with the ten per cent cut. We are now nearing the end of the month of May and on the 15th of next month water will be made available and that will be the time for the normal cultivation in kuruvaï. We see that a bonus has been promised for short term crops at the rate of Rs. 15 per acre. I suggest that at least for the not well-to-do a bonus of

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Rs. 25 should be given and a promise held out that there will be a remission of assessment at least for one or two years. That will be an incentive to grow crops on lands where at present there is no facility to raise the first crop. As stated by the previous speaker, the bonus of Rs. 15 per acre will not at all be sufficient encouragement for ryots to raise crops. Not only should it be enhanced but also at the time of the collection of the assessment some favourable terms should be afforded to them.

“ Then there is the question of sinking of wells. There are two or three kinds of wells. The ordinary one you can sink at a place where water is easily available for the mere digging. In the other case, not only the well will have to be sunk in sufficient depth but also electric fittings should have to be put in and electric energy should be supplied. Though the supply of water will be abundant and supply unailing, it will mean great cost and the poor man will not be able to afford it. In such a case as that, the Government must either give a bonus in respect of the acreage brought under cultivation or some other assistance by way of direct contribution towards the cost of the well should be given. I agree that it is not possible to bring such details within the compass of a leaflet. But executive instructions might be given to the authorities in charge of the supervision of sinking operations that financial assistance should be given. Seeing that the area which such wells can serve will be much wider than that served by the ordinary ones but that the cost will be beyond the means of the ordinary cultivator, better provision must be made for help in the case of wells of this sort. So far regarding the wells. Regarding manure, it is being said that the ryots do not know what kind of manure is suitable for their lands and the Government are no doubt advising the agriculturists to go in for phosphate of ammonia, etc. The ryots know full well and the Departmental people also know that groundnut cake is a very valuable manure and steps must be taken to supply agriculturists with manure of this sort.

“ As Government are aware, there is a conflict of some kind between the mirasidars and labourers—hon. Members would have noticed in the *Hindu* of day before yesterday that a deputation from Tanjore is to wait upon the Premier. When the Hon. Minister for Courts and Prisons had been at Tanjore in connexion with this very question, he suggested that as far as the labourers are concerned they might be given three or four marakkals of paddy per day and the mirasidars agreed. But still there is difficulty and we cannot replace the labourers by others. This is not a case which can be done in a day or two. But for the purpose of sinking of more wells and to bring the production to peak point, I would suggest that the services of sappers and miners of the Military department might be made available for these operations on reasonable terms. This is not as if this is sought to be a solution of the labour problem; on the contrary it is only a temporary device for tiding over the present crisis when you want more food grain and more paddy before the end of October. The

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Hon. the Premier has contemplated the grant of liberal loans for increasing production; but the pamphlet does not throw much light as to the terms of repayment of the loan. My suggestion is that the repayment should be in twenty annual instalments the rate of interest being nominal. As the House is aware, loans are advanced only on the security of the lands and once this is secure, there is no reason to refuse the spreading over of the period of repayment to say twenty years as suggested by me. If in the meanwhile, there is a good harvest and there is a boom, the agriculturist will be the first person to clear it off.

“ Regarding the question of procurement, many suggestions have been made and many of them are worthy of being tried. I invite the Hon. the Premier to give his consideration to the suggestion that I am going to make and I request him not to dismiss it as a special pleading for the mirasidars of Tanjore of whom I happen to be one, though an insignificant one. The Premier has stated in his note that the difficulty experienced has been want of reliable information about surplus stocks available with producers and their reluctance to give the correct figures. It is not due to anything untruthful about him or that the producer fails to understand the gravity of the present situation. The ordinary ryot—I am not speaking of the rich ryots—has got a certain method of calculating his requirements with reference to purposes agricultural and his home consumption. He may have a rough idea of his requirements but over and above that he puts in something. This is not with a view to hoard though there may be certain hoarders who will escape the investigations of the departmental officers. With a view to draw off such surpluses, I suggest that some rise in prices for some period may be tried. By this means an inducement will be offered to the ryot to part with that portion of the paddy that he may consider to be surplus to his requirements. I hope I will not be misunderstood as making a special pleading for the mirasidars and I believe it will be understood in the correct manner for the purpose is to draw off from a mirasidar a quantity of paddy without his nurturing any grievance against the people that estimated his surpluses. If higher prices are offered, his reaction is likely to be. ‘ Government are offering me more than they usually do and perhaps my estimate of consumption both for household use and agricultural purpose may not be correct. I shall sell a reasonable quantity and make some money ’. This I think may be one of the methods by which satisfactory procurement might be effected. Even as regards control price of paddy there is great disparity between the two districts of Trichinopoly and Tanjore. As a non-official I am not in a position to give facts and figures. The prices at Trichinopoly are on better level than at Tanjore. In Trichinopoly there is good facility for cultivation, but not so in Tanjore.”

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MR. PRESIDENT :—“ The hon. Member is exceeding his time-limit.”

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* SRI K. NATARAJAN :—“ One word more, Sir. As regards the amendment by the League to the policy in respect of food administration to the effect that it will be wiser to remedy the existing system wherever it is defective than to completely replace it by another body, and that a board consisting of not more than 15 members and not less than 11 members of the Legislature, I say it does not make provision for all members of the Legislature to take part. There is no use of having select people from the Assembly and the Council on the board. As non-officials, members of the Legislature have to act together; it is their bounden duty as representatives of the people to take an active part in the administration of the Province. Their duty does not consist merely in coming here, to the Legislature, and speaking, and stopping with that. They all have to take an active part in this organization, however much they may be put to trouble. I am against the creation of a compact body to act for the whole province, which is the proposal that has emanated from the League. However, with regard to the provision for appeals, etc., in the Hon. Premier's draft proposals, I have to submit, as a lawyer, and I hope all my lawyer friends will support me, it is a very tardy process, and the object you wish to achieve will not be secured by the proposed process. The proposal will not make a decision to be reached in as short a time as possible.”

SRI B. NARAYANASWAMI NAYUDU :—“ Mr. President, Sir, to-day ours is a deficit province, and it must be borne in mind it is not as if in 1946 we all on a sudden became a deficit province. Our life-line was cut off in December 1941 when Japan entered the war. And therefore the deficit could not be made up. When the gravity of the food situation arose as early as the end of 1941, may I know what steps the Government of Madras took? The first step they took was to set up an official purchasing agency. A Grain Purchasing Officer with the necessary subordinate staff to buy for the province as well as for export outside, subject to a ceiling price fixed by the Commissioner of Civil Supplies, was appointed. From that day onwards, our life-line was cut off and our death-line was opened. And yet we have a Grain Purchasing Officer set up not for supplying food for the province but for sending out produce outside. And this is what the statement on the food situation contains :—

“ Owing to the increased demand on its resources, the Province became for the first time in 1941-42, a net exporter of rice to the extent of 155,000 tons, while previously it had been a net importer to an extent of over 400,000 tons. This was rendered possible on account of the unusually good harvest in 1940-41 when the production of rice rose to 5.2 million tons. However in 1942-43, imports from the Eastern countries ceased altogether. There was a heavy draw-off by the neighbouring States and provinces—the draw-off amounting to a net export of 282,000 tons that year.”

This shows how the position of this deficit province was being handled by responsible men. Now let us see what this province got from the Government of India in those years. In 1942-43 the Government of India gave this province nothing under rice, and under millets they gave 34,895 tons. In 1943-44 this province got nothing under rice, but under millets they got 44,784 tons; in 1944-45 this province got from the Government of India

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48,741 tons of rice and 23,324 tons of millets. So until 1944-45 we did not get any rice from the Government of India, but on the other hand we were sending out rice. I do not know whether there has been any draw-off during 1943-44. It is not stated here unequivocally whether there has been any draw-off in 1943-44, 1944-45 and 1945-46. This House and the public would like to know whether there has been any draw-off from 1942 to 1946. Not only that, Sir. When this Government sent out rice outside the province did it send on cash and carry basis or lease and lend basis? The Director of Civil Supplies in 1942 put up a ceiling price on paddy and sent out 0.13 million tons of rice. I want to know whether the rice now supplied to us is at ceiling price, monopolist price or competitive price. Did the Government of Madras ask the Government of India, 'are you giving us rice at the ceiling price, or competitive price or monopolist price?' There is no mention at all in the statement furnished to us. I have gone into this matter at some length because you should know this province is a deficit province to-day because of the situation that occurred from 1942 onwards. Instead of building the resources, the bottom of the barrel available has been scraped from 1942. That being so, is it open to the Government of India to say to-day that it will give this province only 0.01 million tons of rice? So I say hereafter let there be no rice exported.

"Now with regard to the present Government, I ask: is it in a better position than the previous one? What are their estimates? Nothing but scrape the bottom of the barrel! Such difficulties as exist in the present system of food administration are not remediable. Therefore, I say, the whole system must be replaced. There is no doubt about it. To meet the demand of 1,272,000 tons of food, you have a stock of 521,000 tons, you are promised an import of 146,500 tons and you expect to procure 336,000 tons. I ask, how do you propose to fill the big gap of the deficit of 369,000 tons. Are you going to scrape the barrel? If you wish to do it, do it gracefully; don't do it like the East India Company. I want a declaration from this Government as to how this gap is to be filled. Just as we required a declaration from the Big Three in Simla about the declaration of independence of India, I want a declaration from you as to how you propose to fill this gap. Mr. Masterman proposes ten ounces of food per head per day; but Mr. Prakasam, proposes twelve ounces. I say, block-out all rice to urban areas. Then you will have plenty of rice for the rural areas. Then block-out all wheat to the scheduled classes and the rural areas; they do not know how to prepare wheat diet. It is only the urban people who know how to prepare wheat dishes. By these two block-outs you will be giving some more food to the people of both urban and rural areas. Then, with regard to the production of more food, forthwith make a declaration that three bags of manure or 100 lb. weight of fertilizers per acre will be given free to every ryot holding less than ten acres, and at three-fourth cost to every ryot holding more than ten acres. This should be done as early as possible, for the agricultural season is to commence in the month of June, or as the previous speaker said, from the 15th June. Forthwith make a declaration. Examine what

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stocks you have with regard to grains. Import as far as possible all the fertilizer that you can get. Give each ryot 3 bags of manure or 1 bag of sulphate of ammonia. I would ask you also to forthwith make a declaration with regard to the price of paddy. Yesterday in the Assembly, it was said in the note circulated that the price should be fixed later on. I hope it will not be left to the East India Company, but to the Government of this Province to adumbrate the policy and the principle. So much with regard to food.

“ Then I come to textiles. If the food position is melancholy, the textile position is sad. I want to read from the note of the Commissioner of Civil Supplies. What is the ration card that you issue? If with regard to food we have the ration of 10 oz. of Masterman and 12 oz. of Prakasam, what is the Venkateswaran formula with regard to mill cloth? It is here. I will read it and leave it to you. This is the ration card. One and half yards of chintz and $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards of mull. There is no more in the ration card for a family. Remember $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards of chintz is not for an individual, but for a family consisting of 5 individuals. Never mind what it is. If you bring 11 ration cards or for 55 individuals, you will get one saree. So Mr. Venkateswaran bluntly puts it. Why all this trouble? Why not confine your finer varieties to well-to-do families in towns? Your committees will get ration cards for mulls and chintz. Don't stop it altogether. Unfortunately, Mr. Venkateswaran does not give us figures about handloom manufacture. It could have been very intelligently managed, if we know how many dhoties are being produced. It would have been well, if he had given us a sample also of the rationed cloth of the handloom variety. How many sarees do the handlooms make? I do not want to know about the chintz. How many sarees do the handlooms make? If those figures are given, I will propose the remedy. (The Hon. Sri T. Prakasam : ‘ As many as you want.’) My remedy is this. The trouble is not with regard to cloth. The trouble is with regard to the money that is payable. The cost of one mill saree is five rupees, whereas each handloom sare costs Rs. 15 according to me and Rs. 10 according to Mr. Venkateswaran. Whatever it is, the trouble is there. Therefore I suggest the cost of the handloom cloth which is put here as 96 lakhs must be valued double. The Triplicane man can have the mill saree at the increased rate and the benefit can be given to the handloom man in the village. Combine these two together. The urban man wants fine sarees. Take that money and pay it to the handloom man. The urban woman will get nice things and pay more. Instead of punishing the handloom man, increase the price of the mill-made cloth and put it on the handloom cloth and reduce its price. I submit that is one proposal that I can make constructively so far as I can see. But the main thing, I tell you, is the stranglehold of the Government of India. I think Mr. Venkateswaran will send the ration card to the Government of India and say : ‘ Do you ask me to give one saree for 10 families and $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards of mill cloth for each individual.’ If they say yes, then I say, stop all exports from this

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Province. Yesterday, I asked a question, what is the excess of yarn you are sending to the Government of India and how much cotton are you sending out. (The Hon. Sri T. Prakasam : ' 17,000 bales we are sending out. ') And we are given about that amount? (' The Hon. Sri T. Prakasam : ' We are given more, 21,000 bales. ') Nearly half of the things manufactured here is sent out, and little is got. Are we to carry out the behests of the Government of India and ask our people to go naked, and send all our cotton and yarn to Bombay and other places? In this case our friend has not given the figures. He has given figures in regard to handloom cloth. We export handloom cloth to other Provinces and States, 3,816 bales. We are exporting outside the Province for the yarn coming to us 3,816 bales of cloth, and exports of mill cloth outside the Province, 668 bales. Four thousand bales, nearly one-fourth of the yarn is taken away from us in the manufactured form and export is made to places outside India also. Is not the line-clear to be given now? No more mill-made cloth should be exported outside. No more cotton should be sent to Bombay. I say to Mr. Venkateswaran : find out if you are treated fairly by Bombay. It requires a very strong language and stronger action.. It is a tragic thing that this Presidency should give to ten families one mill saree and seven persons one dhoty. This ought to be brought to the notice of the Government of India, and they ought to be made to learn a lesson."

* MRS. MONA HENSMAN.—“ Mr. President, I only wish to offer a few remarks with regard to the food situation, because I feel that it is mainly with regard to food that we women have got something to do. I would just like to draw attention to certain facts that I noticed while I was touring last year and the year before. For instance, many wells had been dug and a great many more coming into existence in connexion with the Grow More Food Campaign, but I do not think that any attention was being paid to the complaint that the water-supply had not been proportionately increased. Therefore, the yield of the land that was irrigated before could not be as much as formerly, since the water that had been there formerly was also being supplied to greater areas that had come under the Grow More Food Campaign. Sir, in this matter we all wish to co-operate and to grow more food and we take up the challenge which the Hon. the Premier has offered us during the last two or three days. But in that case, the water-supply must be seen to immediately, because multiplication of food is only possible if proportionate multiplication is made to irrigation. This also applies to wells. Wells were of a standard, and where new wells had not been dug, the tanks maintained the same level. In many cases, where new wells had been dug, the old wells went dry. It is, therefore, necessary to see to the balance, not of power in this case, but of water and of yield.

“ Again, the Hon. the Premier has, in his draft proposals, put forward in the third paragraph of page 1, suggestions about the membership of the district committees. A strong plea has been put forward that one of the three members co-opted to the district

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committee should be a man, a representative of the district whole-sale co-operative stores, but I ask that two of these three co-opted members should be women, one a woman in Government service either in the Education or Health Department, and the other a non-official selected from whatever sphere the Hon. the Premier would like. Not that I am a feminist, but I feel that in this way you will get the propaganda you want through much more quickly, especially in the matter of substitute foods. For instance, we have been trying this in Women's Christian College—substitute foods with groundnut and sweet potatoes, and these were also tried out in the Moore Market and at the S.I.A.A. grounds during the Corporation Flower Exhibition. They proved very successful and popular with the public. I do feel that as we have got to reach the population of this country as quickly as possible, it is through the kitchen that we have got to do it. If the Hon. the Premier wants more men, let him increase the total number on the district committee. One official woman member of the Education or Health Department and one non-official who will be an ordinary 'Home-maker' should be attached to these district committees. I feel that in this way you will not only increase the usefulness, but also speed up the efficacy of this campaign."

* MR. R. W. THEOBALD :—“ When I listened to the Hon. the Prime Minister yesterday, I almost made myself believe that we had in the Madras Presidency 45 to 53 million people who, all of them honourable people, wanted to see the food situation put right. Unfortunately, Sir, it is true that in this Presidency, as in Bengal a few years ago, there are people who are not interested in seeing the food situation put right. I would like to ask the Government why they feel that they cannot use the ordinary channels of business to do the work that they have in view. I will just give you an illustration to point out what I mean. About four years ago, I was in Calcutta on some business, and I met an I.C.S. officer who had recently been His Excellency the Governor's Private Secretary. I asked 'What on earth are you doing here?'. 'I am the Steel Controller' he replied. 'What do you know about steel?' I asked, and he said 'Precisely nothing.' Now, Sir, as an ordinary plain businessman, I do feel that the business community from the bottom to the top could be used by Government probably to get better results than they have ever got by short-circuiting the ordinary course of business. I say that with regard to food and cloth, knowing something more about the latter. But one has to bear in mind why we are in this situation. We are in this situation partly as a result of the great war. We are also in this situation as a result of lack of rains last year in some tracts and also as a result of too much rain last year in others. We are really in this bad position as a result of what is commonly called an act of God. Those acts of Gods are generally put right in the following year, and I feel it is a very pleasant augury for this new Government that around the Presidency excellent rain has fallen. I believe that crops will now come in and the present prices paid for them are adequate to get the utmost from the soil. Listening to the speeches as I have been this evening, one feels as if there was panic. As the

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Hon. the Prime Minister said yesterday, if there were to be no hoarding at all, there would be no famine. I am sure there will be no famine because, I believe, that there are stocks in this Presidency which have not yet come out. My hon. Friend sitting over there has said that he knows of certain people—some of them extremely naughty people—who are hoarding stocks in the hope of making money by selling them for a higher price. I hope the Hon. the Prime Minister will at once call up these stocks. The Prime Minister should bring pressure to bear upon such people. If anybody can get rich at the expense of people dying of famine, then shooting is the proper punishment to be given to them. I remember quite well an incident that took place in a meeting of a committee of the Madras Corporation about four years ago. His Excellency Sir Arthur Hope as Chairman reported that some people were not giving as much grain as they should. I suggested that proper punishments be meted out to them. He replied that punishments are being meted out. I asked 'Sufficient punishment, Your Excellency?' 'What would you consider sufficient punishment?' he asked. I said 'Shooting, Sir.' I repeat if there are people withholding food for more money so that other people die, then I believe that this Government should take the most drastic steps against these people. If I am correct and there are hundreds of people who believe as I do that the food is here, then it should be procured. I hope the Prime Minister is correct in saying that it will be procured, because the popular Government is now in power. But my experience unfortunately has been that there are people who are always anxious not only to become lakheers but crores.

'The hon. Member who spoke before me suggested that the price of paddy should be now declared by the Government. I would like to suggest for the Government's consideration that they say that the price of paddy, between now and a certain date, will be a certain figure, and after that at a figure that will be reduced and not increased. I think probably then we would get some more paddy. Mix the threat of a decrease in prices with the threat of jail if you like. Personally I should like something stronger beating if shooting is considered too strong. I have some figures before me. Even if the position is correct as stated, there is a shortage of 268,000 tons. Figures have been given in the other House by a member of my group, which show the situation is not desperate. In the words of Mr. Hoover, my advice to all hoarders is, because there is a good harvest in prospect, sell now. There are 45 million adults in this Presidency, and 21·4 of them will use 17,22,000 tons of rice. But there are 23·6 millions of the Presidency that are going to get 1 lb. of rice. If this is correct, there is a reserve of 4 oz. per person as compared with those people who are going to get 12 oz. I believe that reserve can be found and used. I am perfectly certain that this Government will find it. But I would like to repeat that the normal trade routes will probably be the best for the Government to use. If those normal trade routes misbehave, then you can deal with them better as a popular Government, far better, than the Government which has just gone out. You will have to make the

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punishment fit the crime. But here is the problem reduced, I believe Sir, to a reasonable proportion. That is 14 oz. food per person for the next six months. There is reason to believe that there will be imports and harvests. Therefore the situation so far as food is concerned is better than we might have been led to believe. I believe we should tell the people this and get back their confidence. Otherwise they will be tempted to hoard to the last grain of rice. I believe that it will be possible to make them feel that there is enough for everyman's need but not for his greed. Then, Sir, the problem is more than half solved.

" With regard to cloth, I would respectfully submit that the situation is so deplorable that the rationing of mill cloth should be forthwith dropped and buried decently. To give $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards of chintz and $\frac{1}{2}$ a yard of mull is not enough for any new born babe. We have been told that a certain quantity of yarn goes out of this Presidency. But we receive cloth in exchange. I have more knowledge of this cloth situation and I can say that in India it is being very fairly dealt with. I do not think there can be much improvement. There is a shortage but there is no need for anybody to go naked as there is an adequate handloom supply but it is expensive. As my hon. Friend Colonel Ayyangar said, we can go without cloth. I am of the opinion that we are wearing too many clothes. I am quite prepared to go without my coat. It is not a matter so important as food. May I humbly request the Government to pay attention to food and leave cloth to take care of itself.

" There is one point that the Hon. Mr. Giri will probably know about. Due to the rash policies of the Centre, we are going to lose 700 million yards of cloth per annum. This is rushing into reforms without thought of the implications involved. This reform will cost India 700 million yards of cloth a year. I am perfectly certain that the Hon. Minister in charge of Labour will deal with this matter but the Centre have made his problem much more difficult. But it is very important that there should be good liaison between the Provinces and the Centre. Sir, finally I would say, so far as cloth is concerned, in this Presidency it has been extremely well looked after, and once again I would suggest to the Government that as far as the cloth is concerned, leave it to take care of itself."

* SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—" Mr. President, I crave your indulgence to permit me to make a few remarks sitting."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Yes."

* SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—" I congratulate the Hon. the Premier on the note he has presented to this House. Doubts were expressed in this House and elsewhere about the workability of the scheme of the committee arrangement. I do not feel there is any doubt about it. The Premier has carefully arranged that these committees shall have the district officials as their convenors, secretaries, or presidents, and he has been careful

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enough to associate the legislators of both the Houses in the constituency to be members. With such careful planning, I hope that this committee arrangement will work and that there will be mutual confidence established between the district officials and the people of the village. I say it because now people have no confidence in the district officials. During the war and especially after the introduction of rationing, confidence has been shaken. You may call the ryots dishonest; you may say that there are black-markets and blackmarketeers. So, Sir, now that these committees have both sets of people associated in it, I think they will work well and mutual confidence will be established. If such an arrangement does not work well, then we are not worth our salt. (Hear, hear.)

“ Having said this, Sir, I wish to say that I see here and there in those notes the old, old bureaucratic hand also. I will come to it later. But we have seen what our mission to America has brought. I have heard Sir S. V. Ramamurti, the delegate from Madras, crying out on the radio that they did not get sufficient response. This country has given soldiers and soldiers' blood. The white nations that have been benefited by the sacrifice of our people have not helped us. We have to fall back upon our own resources. No doubt the Government, after sleeping away for 150 years, is at last waking up. I do not mean the present Government, but its predecessor. They have promised to give Rs. 15 per acre as bonus. Rupees 15 is not even half of the ploughing expenditure of an agriculturist per acre. Then it is said that the Government are going to give Rs. 310, that is, half the cost for sinking a well. We heard Dr. T. S. S. Rajan saying yesterday that the half cost for four wells, viz., Rs. 1,240, handed over to him was spent on one well. That is the position. In my own taluk of Sriperumbudur, many ryots took this sum of Rs. 310 and, after some days, being unable to get the necessary labour and equipment, returned the amount to the authorities concerned. I understand that the 18 lakhs of rupees allotted to Chingleput district for sinking wells are lying idle. Nobody applies for grants from that allotment. In such a situation what are the Government going to do? Another difficulty is that there is a stipulation that the sums should be spent during April and May. The month of May is running out. Government may have to extend the time to June and July. Otherwise it will be no use to anybody. June and July are the months during which wells are sunk. If you cannot extend the period to June and July you should ask the Engineering or the Revenue Department to take up the repairs of the tanks, the *othukals* and the supply channels. (The Hon. the Premier; ‘ Time has been extended to end of July.’ Even so, all the works I have mentioned may be carried out and the channels, etc., made fit for irrigational uses. The Chingleput taluk is a dry deficit area with no irrigation facilities. The taluk being near the capital is envied by some people, but the taluk is left uncared for in the matter of these essential facilities.

6-30
p.m.

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“ Now I come to the system of rationing in vogue. Unlike Nellore and the adjacent district of Tanjore, the Chingleput district has no irrigation facilities. The cultivators, therefore, have to incur a lot of expenses for raising anything like a crop on their lands. And yet, the prices fixed for paddy raised in Chingleput under such conditions are lower than that fixed for the paddy from Tanjore, Nellore and even South Arcot. I wonder how this lower price came to be fixed. The proper thing to do is to fix a higher price for paddy grown in districts where the irrigation facilities are poor. But the authorities have gone the wrong way about. Now, in the note prepared and circulated, it is said that the prices cannot be increased. If so, how are you going to make the procurement policy work successfully? You must give the cultivator fair price. On what basis is the Collector going to fix prices? I do not ask that the price of paddy should be fixed at such a level as to lower the consumers' quota. You are now allowing a large margin for the middleman, the millowner and the wholesale dealer. You must curtail that margin. The Ministry has rightly come to the conclusion that the wholesaler must be removed and committees must be set up. What is the committee going to do? Is it going to minimize the incidental extra expenditure and give the surplus to the producer? And, is the Collector going to fix prices on that basis? Or, are the government going to subsidize to the extent necessary for the incidental expenditure and give back the wholesalers' profit to the producer? What method are they going to adopt? I am only concerned with that. If you are not going to give the agriculturist anything more, how do you expect the production to increase? Of course, rain falls; the agriculturist ploughs the field, sows the seed, it germinates, paddy grows, it ripens and is harvested. You can sell it at any price you want. But when the agriculturist has to bale out water from a well with a *pikkotta* or *kavalai* or pumping installations, does not the cost of cultivation increase and in consequence the price of that commodity grown there? Have the officials thought about the cost of a petrol engine or a pump? Have they considered the cost of repairing a small part of an engine? Have they taken into account the price of crude oil and cylinder oil? You have controlled the prices of so many articles. Have you controlled the prices of crude oil and cylinder oil? You have not and the result is the price of this article has gone up from Rs. 60 per ton to Rs. 220 and more. Nobody has controlled the price of this article as it is a foreign monopoly. All these things must be attended to, and all irrigation facilities must be given to the cultivators.

“ The food crisis is going to last for ten years, as the Hon. the Premier has stated. It is not going to pass over in six months or one year. To meet it we must think of a long-range programme—Electricity must be used to the extent possible in this country and electric pumps must be installed wherever you have deep wells. An electric pump fitted to a well can feed about 7 to 10 acres of land. But pumping installations are not available. When we applied to the Agricultural Department, they said that they had

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only a small three-horse-power petrol pump to spare. Sir, when we are unable to get enough petrol for our cars under the present permit system, how can we get petrol to run an engine for agricultural operations? It is impossible. We must sink more wells for irrigation purposes and instal electric pumps wherever possible. As I said, everywhere tanks must be improved and supply channels repaired and water made available for producing more food materials. If, as the European Member said, God gives water, the first crop can be raised alright. What is one to do for the second crop? Let us hope that if God does not give us rains this year, He will not withhold it next year. That he will surely help us, is the common belief. No doubt he will get good rains this year, but irrespective of that, that we must be making unfailing arrangements.

"While on this question of irrigation facilities, I may state that I have heard that there is a scheme called the Arni River Scheme and also a scheme called the Adyar River Scheme. I asked a question about these schemes. The Engineering Department knows nothing about them. I do not know if these schemes have become moth-eaten. Will the Government revive these schemes and impound the waters for the benefit of the Chingleput ryots. Then, Sir, there is the Arogyaswami Mudaliar Report. Its author himself gave me the chief features of that report. Such a report is nowhere available. Will the engineering authorities make a search for it and see how the report could be implemented? All these things will benefit us more than the delegations to America.

"Sir, with regard to cloth control, I have nothing much to say. The cloth shortage is apparent from the fact that we see our old and young people standing in queue before cloth shops, while at the same time we hear that as many as 17 lakhs of yards are being sent out of India. I am not in the know of these details. But let me tell the Hon. the Premier that we must somehow or other produce more cloth. One way of doing it is by increasing the working hours in the mills. In Coimbatore we have the Ahmedbad of the Madras Presidency and we have the famous mills such as the Rajeswari mills, etc. New mills we cannot start. We must be able to induce the existing millowners to work double-shift and make more yarn available for the needs of weavers of handlooms and for the cloth mills. We have also got the spinning wheels. During the years 1942—1945, the spinning wheel activity has increased to a certain extent in our province. The Government should now come forward and increase this activity further. Weavers also must be induced to weave this hand-spun yarn for the benefit of the people of this country."

* K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR :—"Mr. President, Sir, it is admitted on all hands that we are faced with crisis in the food situation and that early and immediate steps should be taken to overcome it. But, I am afraid, the remedy suggested by the Hon. the Premier is worse than the disease. As has been pointed out by some of the other hon. Members of

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this House, there is no necessity at all at present to replace the existing machinery by a completely new one. I would say that that would create a lot of chaos and confusion. Now there is already a machinery which is working according to a plan to alleviate the situation and I must congratulate the authorities concerned for the efficient manner in which they have been carrying out their work and not a word has been said by the Hon. the Premier that that system has broken down or that it has failed to achieve its purpose. Only in the draft proposals of the Hon. the Premier do I find some casual references to the harassment which some of these landholders and villagers are suffering at the hands of the procuring officers. That shows that if at all these procuring officers err on the side of procurement; they are very stringent in their method of procurement rather than lenient. But apart from this, nothing has been shown regarding the necessity for replacing the whole machinery that is at present functioning. I submit, Sir, this is not the time for making experiments in regard to the method of tackling the food question. But as a matter of fact you are making experiments with the lives of millions of human beings by the kind of machinery you are proposing. If there are any defects in the existing machinery—surely no human organization is free from any defects—by all means try to rectify those defects, and then get on with it. Otherwise, by the time you set up an entirely new kind of machinery, as proposed by the Hon. the Premier, the period of scarcity would have elapsed and the crisis would have been at our doors. I am not sure that even by next December we can get the new machinery going. It is a very complicated and cumbersome one and by the time the amount of paddy which a landholder is to give is finally settled, probably the paddy would have gone into other hands. Then, special provision for appeals have been made in the constitution of the committees and by the time these appeals are disposed of much valuable time would have been lost. I submit, Sir, that these village committees will have to be looked upon with suspicion. As Dr. Rajan stated the other day, we must have to take special note of factions in villages, which are a perennial sore. Added to this, there are the personal prejudices between individuals and political prejudices between communities, born of recent elections. These things cannot be ignored. I have been receiving, as Secretary of the Provincial Muslim League, lots of complaints from villages as to how a certain section of the people is being harassed by another section on account of its attitude during recent elections. If now village committees are to be set up, I am sure, these harassments will be aggravated. We must not ignore human weaknesses. We must face the realities of the situation and act according to the needs of the times. Even if these village committees are constituted, I am sure, they will not be able to achieve the purpose for which they are set up, and to avert the impending crisis, we will have to utilize the present machinery. There are Civil Supply Officers who have been working already in the field for this very purpose. Along with them, there are the merchants. If there is any black-market anywhere, it originates mostly from the

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producers who somehow or other keep back the stock. Under the present scheme, the wholesalers and retailers are working under definite and positive instructions from the authorities. There is therefore no question of their resorting to black-market. The prices are fixed and the quantities in their hands are ascertained and distributed in the best manner possible. If you do not work this system, but set up new village committees, you will be giving up the services of experienced men and in their place you will be substituting raw men who have had no experience in the field. Who are going to be the members of the village committee, we do not know; what would be its complexion, we do not know; and who are going to be the agents for procurement, we do not know. You are going to replace the present merchants by some new agents. These agents are intended to collect the surpluses intended for distribution in the village. Then you are going to appoint a collecting agent for collecting surplus grains intended for being exported outside the village. There is confusion at every stage. How are the people to differentiate between the surplus intended for the village and the surplus intended for being sent out of the village? There also there is some confusion. To avoid all these cumbersome processes I would suggest that the services of the present experienced men, both officers and merchants, should be employed, instead of setting up new village committees and thereby experimenting with the lives of human beings at this period of emergency.

"Some hon. Member said that in the present proposals of the Hon. the Premier, there is provision for the constitution of taluk committees, while in the amendment proposed by the leader of the Muslim League Party, there is no such thing at all. If the hon. Member would just read the amendment, he will find that there is provision for constituting advisory committees in taluks and districts consisting of representatives of major political parties. In these circumstances, we state that the scheme, that is proposed by the Government is entirely unworkable and ineffective. It is also dangerous for this reason that they are substituting inexperienced people in the place of experienced men.

"Coming to agriculture, I submit that it is unfortunate that in this country, which is mainly a land of agriculture, we should now be faced with famine. I would suggest in this connexion, that the Government should urge the Department of Agriculture to acquaint the ryots with modern methods of cultivation. The average yield per acre of land in our country is only about 900 lb. while in other advanced countries it is 5,000 lb., and this is the case in spite of the fact that the Agricultural Department has been functioning in this Province for the last several years. Modern methods of cultivation must be taught to the people and they must be compelled to utilize the modern implements. Again it is said that a bonus of Rs. 15 per acre for the cultivation of short-term crops is given as an inducement. I do not think it is a sufficient stimulus. I would suggest that the bonus should be on a graduated scale in proportion to the quantity of the foodgrains surrendered to the Government.

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“ One hon. Member said that wheat should be completely blocked out of the villages. I do realize that villagers will not be able to consume wheat at all and I know cases where the ryots come to ration shops and refuse to take wheat. But if people in this Province eat wheat three times a day, they would surely suffer from indigestion and medical men like my hon. Friends Dr. Rama Rao and Dr. T. S. S. Rajan would alone be benefited thereby. (Laughter.) That great nutrition expert Dr. Aykroyd has said that in a tropical area like the Province of Madras wheat diet can be taken only once every day and if wheat diet is taken for all the three meals of the day, indigestion would be caused.

“ Coming to the question of the textiles it is unfortunate that the Central Government should have adopted a scheme of differential quotas and that Madras should be given such a small quota of 10·8 yards per head per annum while Bombay and other Provinces are given more. Madras is a Province where cotton cloth alone is being used by almost all the people throughout the year, while in other Provinces, people have to use wool in some parts of the year and as such if there is to be a bias in respect of the allocation of cotton cloth the bias should be in favour of this Province. Madras should therefore get a larger quota of cotton cloth and it is unfortunate that this Province should be treated in a contrary manner. I think, it is up to the Textile Commissioner to fight with the Central Government and try to obtain more at least now.

“ As regards the kind of cloth that is supplied to this Province, it is stated on page 3 of the statement on the yarn position by the Hon. the Premier, that the bulk of the cloth allotment to this Province consists of handloom cloth. I want to know, Sir, the reason for this differential treatment. Is it because this Province is poorer than other Provinces? In that case, we should have more mill-made cloth, as it is cheaper than handloom cloth. If it is due to the fact that the handloom industry in this Province is an efficient industry, then I would urge on the Hon. the Premier to take the matter up with the Government of India, and get reduced the credit given to this Province in respect of the handloom cloths manufactured locally and arrange for the export of as much of the handloom cloth as possible outside and obtain for local use more of mill-made cloth. If the handloom industry in this Province has survived all these years, in spite of competition from the mill-made cloth, it is because, free exports were allowed in the past. The prices obtained from the export markets are decidedly higher and hence that industry prospered. If export is restricted, then the industry will naturally suffer. Another important thing in connection with handloom industry is the quantity of yarn supplied to the handloom weavers. It is said that according to the Fact-Finding Committee, there are only 296,101 active looms in this Province. But in the statement of the Hon. Premier on the yarn position, it is stated that the number of active looms at present is about 491,000. Therefore we must get yarn at least in proportion to the number of active looms which are far in excess of the number

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on which the yarn quota has been fixed by the Central Government. I would therefore urge on the Hon. the Premier, to approach the proper authorities in the matter and obtain the appropriate increased quota for this Province. It is said that with the present supply of yarn, the weavers have got work only for ten days in a month. Why should they not be supplied more yarn so as to give them work for a full month? I would urge once again on the Hon. the Premier to obtain more quota of yarn for the handloom industry from the Government of India.

“ There is another important matter in this connection, which requires immediate attention. We find that though many weavers are not able to get sufficient yarn on the basis of quotas assigned to them, some of them at least are able to obtain yarn from the black-market. That is a matter that should receive the serious attention of the Government, and especially of the Textile Commissioner. Just as the cultivator keeps back part of his produce, the mills which produce yarn are keeping back large quantities of yarn and that yarn is sold in black-market at higher prices. Proper assessment should therefore be made of the production in mills and proper experts should be appointed for this purpose. If it is not possible to do so immediately, in respect of all mills at least certain select mills should be inspected and their production assessed by the experts, and on the basis of such assessment, figures for general assessment of all the mills may be arrived at.”

AN HON. MEMBER :—“ Then the Government of India will take away the yarn.”

* K. T. M. AHMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ It is of imperative necessity that black-marketing should be stopped and the mills should be made to surrender their entire production.

“ Again, Sir, it has been stated by the Hon. the Premier, that he is taking up the question of the control of prices of handloom cloths. It is an urgent necessity and fixation of price would relieve the situation to some extent. At present if I am not mistaken, the higher price paid to handloom cloth goes to the merchants and not to the weavers. If prices are controlled, then the consumer and the weavers will both be benefited.

“ Again you may have seen, Sir, when a particular kind of cloth is sold in a shop many people wearing not even a dhoti standing in a queue outside the shop and purchasing whatever is sold irrespective of their requirements. They stand patiently in a row for a long time. But we cannot do the same. They get the cloth not for wearing it themselves but for selling it in the black-market. Sir, some better arrangement should be made to distribute the cloth among the people who actually need it. Otherwise the present system of supply tends only to encourage the black-market. Cloth should be distributed according to the needs and requirements of the people.

“ Finally, Sir, we on this side of the House representing the Muslims of this province and belonging to the Muslim League

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Party are quite prepared to co-operate most sincerely with the Government in all measures concerning food and cloth but we should be given the necessary opportunities for that co-operation. Food is a matter which affects all the people irrespective of party and it is in that spirit that we offer our co-operation. I have therefore the greatest pleasure in seconding the amendment moved by my hon. Leader."

THE HON. SRI T. PRAKASAM :—" If you had omitted the last few words it would have been better."

* MR. PRESIDENT :—" I find many hon. Members wish to speak. I have not been able to control the length of speeches here as I wanted to, because on hearing the speeches, I felt that it would be criminal on my part to control them as the two subjects under discussion are so important for the country that I want the Government to have the full benefit of the advice tendered by the hon. Members. The Hon. the Prime Minister and the other Ministers are too tired to-day. They have been busy the whole day and they are feeling the strain. I have therefore decided to continue the discussion to-morrow. The House will now therefore adjourn till 4 p.m. to-morrow."

II—NOMINATION OF SRI K. NATARAJAN AS ONE OF THE PANEL OF CHAIRMEN.

* MR. PRESIDENT :—" As I am likely to be out of Madras to-morrow and as the Hon. the Deputy President also is not in headquarters, under rule 9 of the Legislative Council Rules, I have great pleasure in nominating Mr. K. Natarajan to preside over the deliberations of the House to-morrow in my absence. I will announce the names of other members of the Panel of Chairmen later on.

" The House will now adjourn till 4 p.m. to-morrow."

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TRUTH ALONE TRIUMPHS